

VZCZCXYZ0015
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBU #0439/01 0551419
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 241419Z FEB 06
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3595
INFO RHMFIUU/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL//SCJ2//
RULGPIA/USCOMSOLANT

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 000439

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC,
WHA/EPSC
CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION US CANCELLATION OF BOLIVIAN
SENATOR ZURITA'S VISA ANTHRAX CASE IN THE US ARGENTINE
MEAT TO THE US MIDDLE EAST 02/23/06

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Today's major international stories include the US canceling Bolivian Senator Zurita's visa; the discovery of an anthrax case in New York; the US enabling Argentine meat (except that from a province that was affected by a recent foot-and-mouth bout) to enter US markets; and the current rupture of ties between Israel and the National Palestinian Authority.

2. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "Entry to the US is banned to Morales senator"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" reports (02/23) "The US cancelled the visa of Bolivian senator and coca leader Leonilda Zurita, who is close to President Evo Morales. This decision threatens to become a hurdle in the bilateral relationship between the US and Bolivia now that the two countries are discussing the terms of the anti-drug struggle in the Andean nation.

"Washington made this decision on the grounds of terrorist suspicions... The senator had to return from La Paz airport when she was ready to travel to the US on an invitation from US universities.

"It is the first incident of this kind between the two governments since Morales took over as Bolivian president last month amid the Bush administration's fears over Morales' defense of coca plantations and his close ties with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Cuban President Fidel Castro.

"Alex Contreras, Morales' spokesperson, pointed out yesterday that the government is 'assessing the situation' and termed the affair as 'sensitive.' 'Relationships based on imposed terms or blackmail should come to an end.'"

- "US fear due to an anthrax case"

Alberto Armendriz, New York-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (02/23) "The discovery of an anthrax case in New York unleashed paranoia in the city and fear all over the country, in which memories are still fresh of five dead and 17 infected by this bacteria five years ago.

"Nonetheless, this time authorities believe contagion

is not related to terrorist activities. The disease was detected in a New York 44-year-old musician who had traveled to Marble Coast last December, from where he brought several untreated animal skins for drum manufacturing.

"When the news was spread, radios and TV channels issued alert and broadcast a press conference with Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

"According to Bloomberg, 'Everything leads us to think it is an isolated and accidental infection and a case in which the disease was naturally transmitted,' in an attempt to calm down the inhabitants of the city."

- "US promised not to delay the entry of (Argentine) meat due to foot-and-mouth disease"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," writes (02/23) "The US agreed with Argentina's proposal to regionalize the problem posed by the foot-and-mouth disease. This means that Argentine meat - except meat coming from 8 Corrientes departments, the ones affected by a recent bout - will be able to enter US markets.

"... Argentine Agriculture Secretary Miguel Campos met yesterday with John Benn, from the Department of Agriculture, and Richard Crowder, USTR Main Negotiator for Agricultural Issues.

"... Campos told 'Clarín' that now Argentina has to submit a written proposal, but, as is the case with Europe, the proposal has already been accepted. According to Campos, this will put the opening of US

markets to Argentine meat on a safe track again after the problem in Corrientes.

"Campos also discussed the access of Argentine lemons to US markets with Benn and Crowder...

"Campos agreed with Richard Crowder on the concern over the possible failure of the crucial Doha round negotiations.

"The royalty conflict with Monsanto Corporation was also included in the agenda of both meetings."

13. EDITORIALS

- "Rupture between Israel and Palestine"

Leading "Clarín" editorializes (02/23) "Through the arrival of Hamas to the Palestinian government and the departure of PM Ariel Sharon from the Israeli Government, Israel and the Palestinian National Authority have entered a time that seems to be marked by uncertainty and, again, by somber predictions.

"... Reality shows a persistent mutual lack of acknowledgment and of a true willingness to understand.

"... A new escalation in confrontational blows and counterblows will only leave losers on both sides."

To see more Buenos Aires reporting, visit our classified website at:
<http://www.state.sqov.gov/p/wha/buenosaires>

The Media Reaction Report reflects articles and opinions by the cited news media and do not necessarily reflect U.S. Embassy policy or views. The Public Affairs Section does not independently verify information. The report is intended for internal U.S.

Government use only.

GUTIERREZ